



Just the Facts...

Doxycycline Deployment Medical Information Sheet

What is doxycycline?

Doxycycline is an antibiotic that can be used for many different bacterial infections. It is often prescribed to deploying soldiers for the treatment of anthrax and the prevention of malaria.

What is malaria?

Malaria is a parasitic disease that is characterized by flu-like symptoms such as headache, chills, fever, and sweating. These symptoms can occur at different intervals. Malaria can also cause jaundice, kidney failure, coma, and even death if untreated. The most common way people are infected is by the bite of an infected female *anopheles* mosquito. The best way to avoid getting malaria is to prevent getting bit by the infected mosquito and using the prescribed medication in an at risk area.

How do I take doxycycline?

- Doxycycline should be taken on an empty stomach with a full glass of water. If not tolerated well, it can be taken with food.
- Avoid lying down for an hour after taking the medication to prevent GI reflux (medication backing up into the esophagus).
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- If taking this medication for malaria prevention, the medication must be started at least two days prior to going into a risk area, continued throughout the stay, and taken for four weeks after returning.
- This medication should not be taken with dairy products, iron, or antacids. These products can make it less effective. Space the dose of the medication at least two hours apart from these products.
- Do not stop taking the medication until the fully prescribed amount is finished, even if symptoms disappear. Stopping therapy too soon may not prevent the disease.
- Space the medication evenly throughout the day and night to ensure the medication stays at a constant level.
- For a missed dose, take it as soon as remembered. Do not "double-up" the dose.
- If already time for the next dose then just add the dose to the end of the treatment

Are there any side effects?

- This medication increases sensitivity to sunlight. Use sunscreen with at least 30 SPF, wear protective clothing, and limit sun exposure as counter-measures.
- This medication can cause nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea and headache during the first few days, but side effects usually subside. If symptoms persist or worsen then notify your health care provider.

Are there reasons that I should not take doxycycline?

- This medication should not be taken if pregnant or by children 8 years and under.
- Do not take this medication if breast feeding.
- Do not take this medication if you have an allergy to doxycycline / tetracycline products.
- This medication can interact with different medications. Tell your health care provider about all the medications you are taking to include herbal or supplement products.
- This medication may interfere with oral contraceptives. To be safe, additional contraception is needed for the duration of therapy and up to 7 days after discontinuing therapy.

What does the military require?

The military requires that all soldiers visiting or deploying to an area with the prevalence of malaria to take medication that will prevent the disease. The medication prescribed may be doxycycline or another medication. The determination is based on drug resistant strains of the disease in the area of travel and the individual's health status.

How else can I avoid getting malaria?

- Wear permethrin treated clothing.
- Use mosquito nets.
- Use permethrin treated nets and tents.
- Use DEET repellents on exposed skin.
- If possible remain indoors or in a well screened area during dusk, dawn, and early evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear clothing that protects the whole body.

Where can I get more information?

- Health care providers
- CDC web site www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm



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